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The Maxwell Family Business: Espionage

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January 5th, 2015: Ghislaine Maxwell is spotted leaving her apartment in New York City and walks to a office building in New York City.

Ghislaine Maxwell is hardly the only Maxwell sibling to continue their father's controversial work for intelligence, with other siblings carrying the torch specifically for Robert Maxwell's sizable role in the PROMIS software scandal and subsequent yet related hi-tech espionage operations.

Many were surprised to learn earlier this month that the key co-conspirator in Jeffrey Epstein's intelligence-linked sexual blackmail operation, Ghislaine Maxwell, had been in hiding in New England since Epstein's arrest and subsequent "suicide" last summer. Her recent arrest, of course, has returned attention to the Epstein scandal and to Ghislaine's ties to the entire operation, in which she played a central and crucial role, arguably more so than Epstein himself.

Ghislaine was [first reported](#) to be living in New England at the mansion of her alleged boyfriend Scott Borgeson on August 14th of last year. Though Maxwell is believed to have stayed there until purchasing the nearby New Hampshire home where she was arrested, attention from her presence on the East Coast was immediately and sensationally re-directed to the West Coast when, a day later on August 15th, [the New York Post](#) published a picture allegedly depicting Maxwell reading a book on "CIA operatives" at an In-N-Out Burger in Los Angeles, California. The photo was [later revealed](#) to have been photoshopped and a fake, but ultimately served its purpose in distracting from her actual location in New England.

While the media frenziedly covered the fake In-N-Out Burger photo, the appearance of an unexpected visitor nearby Borgeson's mansion succeeded in largely slipping under the radar.

On August 18th, Ghislaine's sister Christine [was spotted](#) "packing up a number of bags" into a SUV just a few miles from Borgeson's "secluded beachfront" home. Christine, who currently lives and works in Dallas, Texas, declined to comment on why she was visiting the exact area where Ghislaine was allegedly hiding at the time.

Out of the seven Maxwell siblings, Ghislaine Maxwell has undoubtedly received the bulk of media scrutiny both in recent years and arguably ever since the suspected homicide of the family patriarch, Robert Maxwell, in 1991. In the years since his death, Robert Maxwell's close ties to Israeli intelligence and links to other intelligence agencies have been documented by respected journalists and investigators including [Seymour Hersh](#) and [Gordon Thomas](#), among others.

While Ghislaine's own ties to intelligence have since come to light in relation to her critical role in facilitating the Jeffrey Epstein sexual blackmail operation. Little, if any attention, has been paid to her siblings, particularly Christine and her twin sister Isabel, despite them having held senior roles at the Israeli intelligence front company that facilitated their father's greatest act of espionage on Israel's behalf, the sale of the bugged PROMIS software to the U.S. national laboratories at the heart of the country's nuclear weapons system.

Not only that, but Christine and Isabel later became directly involved with technology-based business ventures that directly involved Ghislaine during the very period she worked with Epstein on behalf of Israeli and U.S. intelligence to ensnare powerful U.S. political and public figures in a sexual blackmail scheme involving minors. At the time, Ghislaine described her profession to a number of newspapers as "an internet operator." Then, after this venture's multi-million dollar sale to a competitor, Christine and Isabel became involved with successors to the PROMIS software scandal that were closely tied to U.S. intelligence and Israeli intelligence, respectively.

Ghislaine herself also became involved in these affairs, as did Jeffrey Epstein following his first arrest, as they began courting the biggest names in the U.S. tech scene, from Silicon Valley's most powerful venture capital firms to its most well-known titans. This also dovetailed with Epstein's investments in Israeli intelligence-linked tech firms and his claims of having troves of blackmail on prominent tech company CEOs during this same period.

With Ghislaine's name and her ties to intelligence now inking their way back into the media sphere, detailing the decades-long course of these technology-focused espionage operations and their persistent ties to the Maxwell sisters demands the attention it deserves, as the need to air out the real Maxwell family business – espionage – is now greater than ever before.

Trap doors and Treason

One of the most brazen and successful operations conducted by Israeli intelligence on a global scale is undeniably its sale of a bugged software program to governments, corporations and major financial and scientific institutions around the world. That software program, known as the Prosecutor's Information Management System or by its acronym PROMIS, was originally

created and marketed by Inslaw Inc., a company created by former NSA official Bill Hamilton and his wife Nancy.

In 1982, Inslaw leased its revolutionary PROMIS software to the U.S. Justice Department, then headed by arch neocon Edwin Meese III, Ronald Reagan's most trusted advisor and who would later go on to advise Donald Trump following the 2016 election. The success of the software, which allowed integration of separate databases and information analysis on a previously unimaginable scale, eventually caught the attention of Rafi Eitan, the notorious and legendary Israeli spymaster and handler of the "[most damaging spy](#)" in American history, Jonathan Pollard. Eitan, at the time, was serving as the then-head of the now defunct Israel intelligence service known as Lekem, which focused specifically on espionage related to scientific and technical information and discoveries.

Eitan [had first learned](#) of PROMIS from Earl Brian. Brian was a long-time associate of Ronald Reagan who had previously worked for the CIA in covert operations and had been in charge of Reagan's healthcare program when Reagan was governor of California. Brian often bragged of [the nickname](#) he had acquired in overseeing that health care initiative – "the man who walked over the dead." In 1982, however, Brian was attempting to build a business empire, in which then-AG Ed Meese's wife was a [major investor](#), and he had first met Eitan while attempting to sell a healthcare system in Iran.

Brian divulged the efficacy of PROMIS, but – instead of praising its revolutionary approach to data analysis – expressed his frustration that the software enabled U.S. federal investigators to successfully track and target money laundering and other financial crimes. He also expressed frustration that he had been left out of the profits on PROMIS, the development of which he had followed closely for several years.

As their conversation wore on, Eitan and Brian [hatched a plan](#) to install a "trapdoor", today more often referred to as a back door, into the software. They would then market PROMIS throughout the world, providing Israeli intelligence and allied elements of U.S. intelligence with a direct window into the operations of its enemies and allies while also netting Eitan and Brian massive profits for the sale of the software. Brian, of course, would also be able to use PROMIS to circumvent authorities investigating financial crimes.

According to the testimony of ex-Mossad official Ari Ben-Menashe, after a PROMIS was obtained Israel's military intelligence through direct collusion with the U.S. Department of Justice, Ben-Menashe [contacted](#) an Israeli American programmer living in California on Eitan's orders. That programmer then planted a "trapdoor" or back door into the software that would allow Lekem covert access to any database connected to a device on which the software was installment.

Once the back door was present, Brian attempted to use his company Hadron Inc to market the bugged PROMIS software around the world, though he first had tried to buy out Inslaw to do so. Unsuccessful, Brian turned to his close friend, then-Attorney General Ed Meese, and the Justice Department then abruptly refused to make the payments to Inslaw that had been

stipulated by the contract, essentially using the software for free, which Inslaw claimed to be theft.

Meese's actions would force Inslaw into bankruptcy and Inslaw [subsequently sued](#) the Justice Department, with a US court later finding that the Meese-led department "took, converted, stole" the software through "trickery, fraud and deceit." With Inslaw out of the way, Brian sold the bugged software to Jordan's and Iraq's intelligence services, a major boon for Israel, and to a handful of companies. Despite this, Eitan was unsatisfied with Brian and Hadron and he quickly turned to the person he thought could most effectively market and sell PROMIS to governments of interest all over the world, Robert Maxwell.

First recruited as an asset of Israeli intelligence in the early 1960s, Maxwell's standing with Israeli intelligence would strengthen considerably beginning in the early 1980s, when he purchased a web of Israeli companies, many of which were official ["service providers"](#) for the Mossad. One of these companies, a computer firm called Degem, had been used for years to provide cover to Mossad assassins that conducted kidnappings and murders in Latin America and Africa.

Through Degem and other Maxwell-owned companies based in Israel and elsewhere, Maxwell marketed PROMIS so successfully that Israeli intelligence soon had access to the innermost workings of innumerable governments, corporations, banks and intelligence services around the world. Many of Maxwell's biggest successes came in selling PROMIS to dictators in Eastern Europe, Africa and Latin America. Following the sale and after Maxwell collected a handsome paycheck, PROMIS' unparalleled ability to track and surveil anything – from cash flows to human movement – were used by these governments to commit financial crimes with greater finesse and used to hunt down and disappear dissidents. Israeli intelligence, of course, watched it all play out in real time.

In Latin America, for instance, Maxwell sold PROMIS to [military dictatorships in Chile and Argentina](#), which were used to facilitate the mass murder that characterized Operation Condor as the friends and families of dissidents and so-called subversives were easily identified using PROMIS. PROMIS was so effective for this purpose that, just days after Maxwell [sold the software](#) to Guatemala, its US-backed dictatorship rounded up 20,000 "subversives" who were never heard from again. Of course, thanks to the back door in PROMIS, Israeli intelligence knew the identities of Guatemala's disappeared before the victim's own families. Israel was also [intimately involved](#) in the arming and training of many of the same Latin American dictatorships that had been sold the bugged PROMIS software.

Though Israeli intelligence found obvious use for the steady stream of sensitive and classified information, their biggest prize was yet to come – top secret government laboratories in the United States. Eitan [tasked Maxwell](#) with selling PROMIS to US labs in the Los Alamos complex, including Sandia National Laboratory, which was and is at the core of the US nuclear weapons system. Notably, the eventual sale of PROMIS to these laboratories by Maxwell occurred during the same period in 1984 when Eitan tasked one of Israel's top experts in nuclear targeting with supervising Jonathan Pollard's espionage of U.S. nuclear secrets on Israel's behalf.

In order to plot how he would accomplish such a feat, Maxwell would meet with none other than Henry Kissinger, who told him that – in order to sell PROMIS to these sensitive laboratories – he needed to enlist the services of then-Senator for Texas John Tower, who was the head of the Senates’ Armed Services Committee at the time. Maxwell quickly struck a deal with Tower and then, using Mossad money, [paid Tower \\$200,000](#) for his services, which included opening doors – not just to the Los Alamos complex, but also to the Reagan White House. Tower would arrange a trip for Maxwell to travel to Sandia National Laboratory, where he would market PROMIS. Unlike most other PROMIS sales, this one would not be handled by Degem, but a US-based company called Information on Demand.

It is worth noting that, despite Tower’s obvious and treasonous actions with respect to U.S. national security, another long-time “source” of Robert Maxwell, George H.W. Bush, would attempt to nominate Tower to server as U.S. Secretary of Defense. When the Senate refused to confirm Tower, only then did Bush nominate Dick Cheney, who would then head the Pentagon and oversee the U.S.’ role in the First Gulf War. Not long after his failure to secure the nomination as Pentagon chief, Tower died in a suspicious plane crash soon after the equally suspicious death of Robert Maxwell.

Front Companies and FBI Cover-ups

Robert Maxwell [purchased](#) Information on Demand from its founder, Sue Rugge – a former librarian, through the Pergamon Group in 1982 – the very year plans were made by Rafi Eitan and Earl Brian to subvert PROMIS. Its offices were just a few doors down from the home of Isabel Maxwell and her first husband Dale Djerassi, son of the scientist credited with creating the birth control pill.

According to [FBI files](#) obtained by Inslaw Inc. via a FOIA request in the 1990s, San Francisco’s FBI opened an investigation into Information on Demand a year later in October 1983 and subsequently interviewed Rugge about the business and its activities. She told the FBI that the company’s sources “include over 250 computer data bases” and that company uses these to “locate single facts as well as provide answers to complex questions dealing with such areas as comprehensive marketing research, custom data summaries, sophisticated literature searching, current awareness service and global information capability.

One of these databases included Lockheed’s Dialog database and “the Defense Technical Center which is connected to the Department of Defense (DOD) which contains classified information.” She asserted, however, that the company “has no password for access and further no need for access.” Elsewhere in the document, it notes that Information on Demand claimed not have any access to classified information “to the best of their knowledge” and “includes information concerning government and various available means of tapping government information databases.”

The FBI asked Rugge about one client of the company in particular, whose name and identifying information is redacted in its entirety, but notes that this mysterious client had

worked with Information on Demand since at least 1973. Subsequent efforts by Inslaw Inc. and others to learn the identity of the redacted client have been unsuccessful since 1994.

Notably, just one month before the FBI opened an investigation into Information on Demand and interviewed Sue Rugge, another related Maxwell-owned firm, Pergamon International Information Corporation, [had sent a letter](#) to then-CIA Director Bill Casey, offering to provide the agency with access to patent databases. The only redacted portion of the letter is the identity of PIIC's Executive Vice President, who had written the letter to Casey.

After Rugge had been interviewed, FBI interest in Information on Demand peaked soon after in June 1984, when a formal investigation was opened. This took place after two employees of Sandia National Laboratory who worked in technology transfer approached the Bureau over Information on Demand's efforts to sell PROMIS to the laboratory. Those employees were compelled to contact the FBI after obtaining information from employees of the National Security Agency (NSA) regarding "the purchase of Information on Demand Inc. by one Robert Maxwell, the owner of Pergamon International." The specific information on this purchase from the NSA is included in the report but redacted in its entirety. Two months later, one of the Sandia employees followed up with the Bureau, suggesting that the NSA and FBI jointly investigate Information on Demand, but was essentially stonewalled and told to take it up with FBI headquarters.

The FBI case file is coded as a foreign counter-intelligence investigation specifically, suggesting that the case was opened because the FBI was made aware of the alleged involvement of a foreign intelligence service in some aspect of Information on Demand's activities that related specifically to the "dissemination, marketing or sale of computer software systems, including but not limited to the PROMIS computer software product." It also noted that Maxwell himself had previously been the subject of a "security investigation" conducted by the FBI from 1953 until 1961, the year Maxwell was formally recruited as an Israeli intelligence asset.

In early August 1984, FBI headquarters and other higher-ups in the Ed Meese-led Department of Justice, which itself was complicit in the whole sordid PROMIS affair, ordered the New Mexico office to halt its investigation into Information on Demand, Maxwell and PROMIS. The cover-up, oddly enough, continues today, with the FBI [still refusing](#) to release documents pertaining to Robert Maxwell and his role in the PROMIS scandal.

Several months following the shuttering of the FBI investigation into Information on Demand, Robert Maxwell again returned to Sandia National Laboratories in February 1985, signing the contract for the sale of PROMIS and listing himself as President and CEO of Information on Demand. A few months later, he passed that role on to his daughter Christine, who served as the company's president and CEO up until her father's death in 1991, according to [her résumé](#). Upon the collapse of his business empire shortly after his demise, which also resulted in the closure of Information on Demand, Christine created a company called Research on Demand that offered similar services and specialized "in Internet- and Big Data analytics-related market studies for companies in the Telecoms."

In addition, Isabel Maxwell, who lived in close proximity to the company's offices in Berkely, CA, [told Haaretz](#) that she had also worked for Information on Demand, which she refers to as "her sister's company," following her 1989 divorce from Dale Djerassi.

Recreating their Father's Legacy

After the death of Robert Maxwell, in what most of his family and many of his biographers regard as a murder conducted by Israeli intelligence, his children began to pick up the pieces and sought to rebuild their father's empire. Of his seven children, five took on different aspects of their father's vast portfolio.

Kevin and Ian Maxwell took over much of his businesses (and the associated fall-out) and his murky network of interlocking companies, trusts and foundations spread throughout the world. Ghislaine, having already positioned herself in New York at her father's behest to anchor his efforts to expand his empire and operations into Manhattan, began a sexual blackmail operation on behalf of Israeli intelligence alongside Jeffrey Epstein. Christine and Isabel, however, would take off where Maxwell's intelligence-linked work with PROMIS and in technology had left off by cashing in on a new revolutionary technology, the Internet.

"We literally were trying to think about how to restart this whole business" that had collapsed after their father's death, Christine Maxwell [would later say](#) of her decision to found, along with her husband Roger Malina, Isabel and Isabel's then-husband David Hayden, their internet services company – the McKinley Group – in January 1992. Isabel would remember the decision similarly, [telling Wired](#) in 1999, that she and her sister had "wanted to circle the wagons and rebuild," seeing McKinley as "a chance to recreate a bit of their father's legacy." In 2000, Isabel [would tell The Guardian](#) that her father would "love it [the internet] if he was still here." "He was very prescient....He'd be in his element, he'd be having a blast, I'm sure he'd be thrilled to know what I'm doing now," she told the UK-based publication while "throwing back her head and laughing loudly." Notably, at that time, Isabel was leading Israeli software company with ties to Israeli military intelligence and powerful Israeli political players, including some who had previously worked directly under her father.

It's not hard to see why Christine and Isabel saw the internet as their chance to expand upon and rebuild upon Robert Maxwell's "legacy." As previously mentioned, Christine, right up until her father's death, had been president and CEO of the Robert Maxwell-owned Israeli intelligence front company, Information on Demand, where Isabel had also worked. Upon his death, Christine had founded a related company called Research on Demand, which specialized in "internet and big data analytics" for telecommunications firms, and would later overlap with the McKinley Group's work. McKinley began as a directory with a rating system for websites, later transitioning into the Magellan search engine, all of which Isabel Maxwell [told Cnet](#) in 1997 were all Christine's idea.

McKinley created what became known as the Magellan online directory, remembered as "the first site to publish lengthy reviews and ratings of websites." Magellan's "value-added content" approach attracted several large corporations, resulting in "[major alliances](#)" with AT&T, Time Warner, IBM, Netcom and the Microsoft Network [MSN] that [were negotiated by](#)

Isabel Maxwell. Microsoft's major alliance with McKinley came in late 1995, when [Microsoft announced](#) that Magellan would power the search option for the company's MSN service. Time Warner first chose Magellan for its early web portal called Pathfinder and Magellan was on the homepage of the internet browser Netscape for much of the 1990s.

However, McKinley's fortunes were troubled as its efforts to be the first search engine to go public fell through, igniting [a stand-off](#) between Christine Maxwell and Isabel's husband that also resulted in the company's [essentially falling behind](#) other market leaders both missing the window for a second IPO attempt and lagging behind in adding ad revenue to their business model. Excite, which was later acquired by AskJeeves, [ultimately bought](#) the McKinley Group and Magellan for 1.2 million shares of Excite stock in 1996, which was then valued at \$18 million. It was allegedly Isabel Maxwell who made the deal possible, with Excite's CEO at the time, George Bell, [claiming](#) she alone salvaged their purchase of McKinley.

Despite the company's lackluster end, the Maxwell sisters and other stakeholders in the company, Ghislaine Maxwell among them, not only obtained a multi-million dollar payout from the deal, but also forged close connections with Silicon Valley high-rollers. Upon McKinley/Magellan's sale, the overt ties of Christine and Isabel Maxwell to intelligence in both the U.S. and Israel would grow considerably.

A Family Affair

While the company is often framed as being a venture between Christine and Isabel Maxwell, McKinley Group and Magellan were much more than just the twin sisters' business. For instance, [a November 2003 article](#) in *The Evening Standard* notes that Christine and Isabel launched the company with considerable help from their brother, Kevin Maxwell who the article described as being "consumed by an overwhelming desire to be his 'dad reincorporated'" according to confidants. Another [Evening Standard article](#) from March 2001 cited report that "Kevin played a major role" in the company's affairs.

In addition, at the time, [The Sunday Times noted](#) in November 2000 that Ghislaine Maxwell "had a substantial interest in Magellan" and netted a considerable sum following its sale to Excite in 1996. It also noted that Ghislaine, throughout the 1990s, had "been discreetly building up a business empire as opaque as her father's" and that "she is secretive to the point of paranoia and her business affairs are deeply mysterious." However, she would nonetheless describe "herself as an 'internet operator'" even though "her office in Manhattan refuses to confirm even the name or the nature of her business." [A separate article in The Scotsman](#) from 2001 also notes that Ghislaine "is extremely secretive about her affairs and describes herself as an internet operator."

Exactly how involved Ghislaine Maxwell was involved in the McKinley Group and Magellan is unclear, though her decision to describe herself as an "internet operator" and her documented "substantial interest" in the company suggest that it was more than superficial. What is notable, however, is that Ghislaine's time as an "internet operator" and her business interests

in Magellan overlap directly with her time working alongside Jeffrey Epstein in an [Israeli intelligence-linked sexual blackmail operation](#).

During this period of time, Ghislaine Maxwell and Jeffrey Epstein frequently had considerable overlap in their finances, with press reports from the time often asking whether Ghislaine's expenses were paid by Epstein or through her access to the "lost Maxwell millions" that had been hidden in a web of murky, untraceable financial entities and allegedly "disappeared" following his 1991 death.

The latter is certainly a possibility as it was Ghislaine who was the first to walk into her late father's office on the Lady Ghislaine following his death, where she "shredded all incriminating documents onboard," according to journalist John Jackson [who witnessed](#) the scene. This would likely mean that she was quickly able to distinguish which documents were "incriminating" and was intimately aware of his more unsavory business activities. In addition, prior to his death, Robert Maxwell had provided Ghislaine with a "[tailor-made](#)" New York corporation called Maxwell Corporate Gifts, of which little is known. The corporation was [reportedly intended](#) to aid her in establishing a foothold in New York's power base for Robert Maxwell's planned expansion into New York society, a plan first set into motion following his purchase of the *New York Daily News*.

Notably, [an article](#) from *The Evening Standard* in 2001 makes an odd comment about a major source of income from Epstein during the 1990s, stating that "has made many millions out of his business links with the likes of Bill Gates, Donald Trump and Ohio billionaire Leslie Wexner, whose trust he runs." In addition, Epstein victim Maria Farmer [noted in an interview](#) that she overheard Ghislaine and Epstein discuss Bill Gates as though they knew him well in 1995. However, these mentions of Bill Gates here defies the official narrative about the Epstein-Gates relationship, which claims they first met in 2011. Given the "major alliance" between McKinley/Magellan and Microsoft that was forged in 1995-1996, it is certainly possible that Epstein's pre-2001 "business links" with Bill Gates were, in fact, related to Ghislaine's involvement and stake in Magellan. This is also supported by the fact that, as will be shown in Part 2 of this report, Magellan co-founder Isabel Maxwell had a personal relationship with Bill Gates and that he put her subsequent company, Israel-based CommTouch, "[on the map](#)" after a major investment that had been brokered between Gates and Isabel personally. Part 2 will also show how both Isabel and Christine's overt involvement, with Israeli and U.S. intelligence, respectively, deepened after Magellan was sold to Excite in 1996.

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